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**Method and apparatus for providing demographically targeted television commercials.**

Different commercial messages are broadcast to different demographically targeted audiences in a cable television system or the like. A first television channel contains television programs and periodic commercial messages. A second television channel contains alternate commercial messages. Demographic characteristics of a viewer are identified, and commercial messages are selectively provided from the first or second channel, depending upon the viewer's demographic characteristics. Demographic data can be input by a viewer via a remote control,

downloaded to a subscriber's converter from a remote headend, or programmed into the converter at installation. Prioritization of the demographic characteristics of a plurality of television viewers watching a program together enables commercials to be targeted to the viewer having highest priority. Statistical data can be maintained concerning the number and identity of subscribers viewing specific commercials.

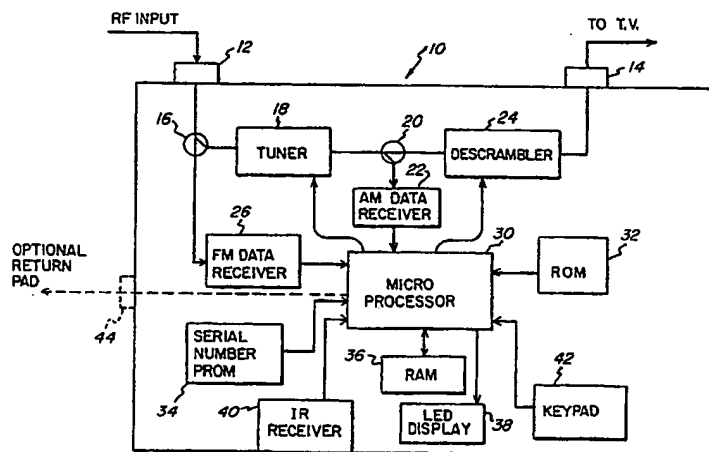


FIG. 1

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